

CAPITAL CITY AIRPORT
(Capital City Airport Club Hangar)
Capital City Airport, West Ramp Area
Lansing Vicinity
Clinton County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-320-F

HAER
MICH
19-LANDOV
IF-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Northeast Field Area
Chesapeake/Allegheny System Support Office
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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CAPITAL CITY AIRPORT, Club Hangar

HAER No. MI-320-F

Location: Capital City Airport, West Ramp Area
Lansing vicinity, Clinton County, Michigan

UTM: 16.696210.4738320
Quad: Lansing North, 1:24,000

Date of Construction: 1927

Engineer: Reniger Construction Company
Architect: None

Present Owner: Capital Region Airport Authority
Capital City Airport
Lansing, Michigan

Present Occupants: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Club Hangar is the most significant of all of the West Ramp buildings. Not only is it an excellent example of a hangar as a building type, but it is also the oldest existing structure at the West Ramp, having been saved and moved several times throughout the history of the Capital City Airport.

Project Information: The Club Hangar is an identified airport hazard under Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards, and is scheduled for removal. During an environmental review (1988), the State Historic Preservation Officer determined that the building meets the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, would require mitigation of the adverse effect caused by its removal. The Memorandum of Agreement (1995) stipulates documentation of the Club Hangar according to HAER guidelines. This documentation was undertaken to fulfill that stipulation.

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Refer to the Overview Report MI-320 for a more complete description of the history of aviation and its ties to Lansing. The documentation of this individual element provides a more specific history and significance of the Club Hangar in its context of the Capital City Airport.

On October 6, 1925 the Lansing Chamber of Commerce requested use of 200 acres of land under the jurisdiction of the Boys Vocational School, for an "aviation field." The State Administration granted the request, directing that a portion of the site be "placed in condition for use as an aviation field" (N.B. 1956). Act 182 of 1927 authorized the State Administration to own and operate an airport, and to use for that purpose any suitable property owned and controlled by the State. That same year the Lansing Chamber of Commerce erected the Club Hangar at the landing field, and with that Capital City Airport was born.

The Club Hangar was erected by Reniger Construction Company of Lansing, Michigan, project no. 546, from standard plans for a 60' x 40' Blaw-Knox Co. metal hangar (Ruth 1992). The hangar doors are full-height sectional panels that hang on a track, allowing the doors to slide inside the hangar along the side walls. Although clad with galvanized sheet metal and painted, they are designed to look like wood panel doors with stiles and rails. The windows are standard commercial metal units with projecting operable sash, which allow maximum daylight into the hangar. Two ventilators on the roof ridge allow hot air and fumes to escape. The hangar was anchored to a perimeter footing, and the interior left as graded gravel, in its first two locations.

Original photographs, dated 1927, show the hangar in its original location. It is speculated that the Chamber either built the hangar specifically for the Aero Club of Lansing, which was in the formative stages at that point, or built the hangar and, for some unknown reason, turned it over to the Aero Club of Lansing. The Club was formally organized on February 1, 1928, for the purpose of promoting interest in aviation in Lansing and the surrounding community. By June of 1928, the Club had already purchased one training plane which, under the direction of Foster Airways, was used to offer flight training on a regular basis to its members (Lansing Airport News 1928).

In 1932 the state purchased its first plane and kept it in the Club Hangar as well. Soon, a growing Capital City Airport required additional hangar and office space so the state built its own hangar and administration building in 1936. Within a few years plans were prepared by the Board of Aeronautics for a newer State Hangar to be located south of the administration building, and farther from the centerline of the E-W runway. Construction of this newer facility in 1939 required moving the Club Hangar to clear the site, and it was temporarily relocated west of the old State Hangar and leased to a private fixed base operator, Clyde Rice.

After World War II, Hebert Aviation Company started up as a fixed base operator and leased the Club Hangar in its location at the north end of the West Ramp, and later moved it west of the new hangar the company built in 1950 at the south end of the West Ramp. Rather than dismantle the old metal Club Hangar, it was placed on logs and rolled down the runway by a barn mover to its new location. Instead of the dirt floor it had in its previous two locations, with this final move it was anchored to a permanent concrete foundation and integral concrete floor slab. The interior was also modified by adding insulation, and plastered walls and ceiling. From Hebert's use of the hangar up until the early 1990s, the hangar was leased and subleased at various times by several other companies including: Landy Taylor and Associates, Inc.; Vector Construction, Inc.; Capital City Aviation; and, possibly also Hangar Services, Inc./CAM AIR.

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It is unclear when in the early 1990s the hangar was vacated, but a likely date is September of 1991 when Vector Construction, from all indications the last lessee of the Club Hangar, vacated all of its West Ramp buildings. The Club Hangar as it exists is scheduled for demolition to enable airport expansion, and compliance with FAA regulations requiring a wider clear zone associated with the runways.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. ENGINEERING DRAWINGS

No drawings were found of the Club Hangar.

B. HISTORIC VIEWS

Club Hangar: Exterior. 1927. Photographed by R. C. Leavenworth. Lansing, Michigan. Private collection of Babe Weyant Ruth. Photographed for Hank Reniger the same year his company completed the construction. The word "Lansing" is painted on the roof. Door operation is unique and symmetrical. All of the sections are full height, steel framed, and clad in galvanized sheet metal. The end sections are hinged at each side. Note the missing vertical stile in the lower right panel; this area is hinged separately to allow access without opening the large door sections. The six large sections divide at the center to slide on a suspended track around the sides of the hangar. An additional person door provides access from the rear. The floor was left as gravel, corresponding to the gravel apron, taxiways, and runways at the time the hangar was constructed.

Club Hangar: Interior. 1927. Photographed by R. C. Leavenworth. Lansing, Michigan. Private collection of Babe Weyant Ruth. Photographed for Hank Reniger the same year his company completed the construction. Note doors in open position with the first hinged section against the jamb and the three large center sections hung from the track along the side of the hangar.

Club Hangar: Miscellaneous Exterior Views. 1929 - 1939. Lansing, Michigan. Private collection of Babe Weyant Ruth. The photographs in this collection confirm the continuous use of the Club Hangar in its original location.

B. INTERVIEWS

Ruth, Babe Weyant, Interview with the author. Lansing, Michigan, 7 May 1992. Babe's association with the Capital City Airport was as an aviator, flight instructor, and unofficial historian of the airport from the early 1930's until the present (1992).

C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Land Files. Capital Regional Airport Authority. Lansing, Michigan. Parcel 1 - Boys Vocational School Property; Parcel 3 - Capital City Boulevard access drive; Parcel 16 - State Health Department; Parcel 59 - State Health Quarantine Farm.

Lansing Airport News: Airport Dedication Number. (June) 1928. Making History: 5-6; Lansing's Airmen: 7; Aero Club of Lansing Inc.: 8; A New Lansing Industry: 9, 33; Airport Government: 13; Aerial Photography: 17, 35; Local Airways Firm Starts Second Year of Operation; Michigan, Lansing and Air Mail; Michigan State Police and Aviation: 12, 21; New Air Service Firm Organized in Lansing. A photocopy of the original program is in the collection of Babe Weyant Ruth. There are no known additional copies.

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(N.B.) 1956, January 10. Statutes, Opinions of the Attorneys General, and/or Summaries of Minutes of various state boards and commissions regarding uses and transfer of the property all arranged chronologically with comments. Land file Parcel 1. All land files are in the offices of the Capital Region Airport Authority.